

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1, 8, 11, 29, 36, 39, 40 and 41 have been amended. Support for the amendments may be found in the specification and claims as originally filed. No new matter has been added. Claims 7 and 35 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Additionally, claims 15-28 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer as being drawn to non-elected inventions.

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-6, 8-14, 29-34 and 36-43 will be pending in the present application, with claims 1 and 29 being independent.

**1. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103**

The Office Action rejects claims 1-14 and 29-43 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kubota (U.S. Patent 6,041,323) in view of Charnock et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0182310). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Kubota discloses a system for searching for stored documents that are similar to a document having one or more particular string characteristics (see col. 1, lines 8-14). A unique character string is extracted from an input document and a similarity search is performed by using the unique character string as the basis of the search (see abstract).

Charnock et al. discloses a system for organizing documents and in some cases, portions of their content, into causally related sets of information (see paragraph 0062). The system provides a search technique that returns sets of related documents that are not merely grouped by textual similarity, but also grouped and sequenced according to the social context in which they were created, modified or quoted (see paragraph 0063). This allows a precise set of documents to be retrieved from a large corpus of texts using simple search queries, with the added benefit of

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presenting the returned documents in the context of causally related documents even when those other documents do not, individually, satisfy the search criteria. Charnock et al. also discloses hierarchical clustering of documents (see paragraph 0304).

However, Kubota and Charnock et al., alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the elements of updating a collection of information by grouping received information with one or more pre-existing clusters in the collection that have characterizing features in common with the received information and grouping together a plurality of pre-existing clusters having common characteristics to produce a neighborhood of clusters, as included in amended independent claim 1. Independent claim 29 has been amended to include similar elements.

The Office Action on pages 7-8 asserts that Charnock et al. teaches grouping together clusters having common characteristics to produce a neighborhood of clusters which are all published in response to a customer request (citing paragraphs 862-863). However, Charnock et al. discloses a relevancy ranking scheme in which results from a clustering analysis are returned according to cluster. The clusters are ranked according to how well the canonical member matches the values of most important evidence types specified in the query. The user determines which evidence types are most important using a combination of ordinal ranking and a 5 point anchored importance scale ranging from “critically important” to “unimportant” (see paragraphs 862-867). Therefore, Charnock et al. discloses ranking clusters and assigning importance levels to evidence types, but fails to disclose or suggest grouping together a plurality of pre-existing clusters having common characteristics to produce a neighborhood of clusters, as included in claims 1 and 29. In contrast to Charnock et al., the specification of the present application discloses that at periodic intervals, during what is called the publication cycle, clusters are checked to see if previously separate clusters should be grouped together into a neighborhood, and if so, coalesced together (see page 10, lines 1-12).

Therefore, since Kubota and Charnock et al., alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the elements of independent claims 1 and 29, these claims are allowable.

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Claims 2-6, 8-14 and 42 depend from claim 1. Claims 30-34, 36-41 and 43 depend from claim 29. As discussed above, claims 1 and 29 are allowable. For at least this reason, and the additional features recited therein, claims 2-6, 8-14, 30-34 and 36-43 are also allowable.

Since claims 7 and 35 have been canceled, the rejection of these claims is rendered moot.

For at least the reasons above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-14 and 29-43 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

**2. Conclusion**

Accordingly, in view of the above amendment and remarks it is submitted that the claims are patentably distinct over the prior art and that all the rejections to the claims have been overcome. Reconsideration and reexamination of the present application is requested. Based on the foregoing, applicant respectfully requests that the pending claims be allowed, and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee that is not covered by an enclosed check please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0463.

Respectfully submitted,  
Microsoft Corporation

Date: May 7, 2007

By: /Sung T. Kim/

Sung T. Kim, Reg. No.: 45,398  
Attorney for Applicants  
Direct telephone: (703) 647-6574  
Microsoft Corporation  
One Microsoft Way  
Redmond WA 98052-6399

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING OR TRANSMISSION [37 CFR 1.8(a)]**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being electronically deposited with the USPTO via EFS-Web on the date shown below:

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